

Head Start Referral Procedures

HISD and Head Start agencies work collaboratively to ensure that children who may be eligible for special education services are referred and evaluated in a timely manner. Four Head Start agencies provide services for children within HISD attendance boundaries. The agencies are:

- Neighborhood Centers, Inc. (NCI)–Head Start
- AVANCE–Head Start
- Harris County Department of Education (HCDE)–Head Start
- Gulf Coast Community Services Association (GCCSA)–Head Start

Collaboration between HISD and Head Start include:

- Children enrolled in Head Start and suspected of having a disability are referred to the HISD homeschool for evaluation.
- Parents of children with a current IEP may elect to enroll their child in Head Start, however the agreed upon IEP will not be implemented at Head Start.
- Head Start staff may attend ARD/IEP committee meetings with parent permission
- HISD and Head Start personnel maintain on-going communication to facilitate the child's success, however Head Start does not exist as a special education placement for students identified as having a disability as determined by the ARD/IEP committee.

Houston ISD also collaborates with Head Start agencies through the establishment and maintenance of Head Start classes on HISD campuses. These classes are taught by HISD prekindergarten teachers and Head Start staff and are identified as HISD/Head Start Collaborative. Students in these classes may be zoned to other HISD schools. The referral, evaluation and IEP process is completed on the student's home campus and not necessarily the site of their HISD/Head Start Collaborative.

The Young Learners Charter School is an alternative HISD and Head Start program. This program is housed at Head Start facilities throughout the city of Houston.

The following chart describes the referral procedures for young children enrolled in Head Start.



5.1 Chart of Referral and ARD/IEP Procedures for Children Enrolled in Head Start

Category A HISD/Head Start Collaboratives	Category B Young Learners Charter School	Category C AVANCE, GCCSA, HCDE and NCI Center Sites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head Start staff completes screening as required by Head Start agency procedures and HISD pre-k teacher documents in-class interventions* Designated HISD speech therapy staff conducts screening if needed to determine the need for formal speech/language testing. HISD pre-k teacher completes referral forms for children suspected of having a disability and submits to the Campus Intervention Assistance Team (IAT). IAT reviews parent information, Head Start/HISD screening and classroom documentation and recommends evaluation or sends notice to parents indicating refusal to evaluate, copying teacher and Head Start supervisor. Upon completion of evaluation, campus special education department chairperson completes the following compliance steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Invites Head Start staff to initial and subsequent ARD/IEP committee meetings Provides Head Start representative with copies of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ARD/IEP committee reports updated IEP goals/objectives report cards and progress reports Facilitates communication between HISD special education service providers and Head Start staff. Communication should occur at least once every grade reporting period and be documented in the child's special education eligibility folder. <p>Contact Betty Hunt at bhunt1@houstonisd.org to troubleshoot issues if needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head Start staff completes screening as required by Head Start agency procedures and documents in-class interventions* Designated HISD speech therapy staff conducts screening if needed to determine the need for formal speech/language testing. Head Start staff completes referral forms for children suspected of having a disability and sends to the Alternative and Charter Schools Young Learners administrative contact. Alternative and Charter School staff follow standard campus intervention assistance and referral processes Upon completion of evaluation, Alternative and Charter School special education itinerant teacher or campus SLP completes the following compliance steps with support from Young Learners staff: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Invites Head Start staff to initial and subsequent ARD/IEP committee meetings Provides Head Start representative with copies of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ARD/IEP committee reports updated IEP goals/objectives report cards and progress reports Facilitates communication between HISD special education service providers and Head Start staff. Communication should occur at least once every grade reporting period and be documented in the special education eligibility folder. Contact the Alternative and Charter Schools Office for additional information concerning testing and scheduling ARD/IEP meetings <p>Contact Betty Hunt at bhunt1@houstonisd.org to troubleshoot issues if needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head Start staff completes screening as required by Head Start agency procedures and documents in-class interventions* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated HISD speech therapy staff conducts screening if needed to determine the need for formal speech/language testing. Head Start staff completes referral forms for children suspected of having a disability and sends with screening and classroom intervention documentation to the Elementary Special Education Senior Manager. Elementary Program Specialist will assign to appropriate staff for evaluation i.e., campus SLP, Intake Center, etc. Upon completion of the evaluation, home campus special education department chairperson completes the following compliance steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Invites Head Start staff to initial and subsequent ARD/IEP committee meetings Provides Head Start representative with copies of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ARD/IEP committee reports updated IEP goals/objectives report cards and progress reports Facilitates on-going communication between HISD special education service providers and Head Start staff. Communication should occur at least once every grade reporting period and be documented in the special education eligibility folder. <p>Contact Betty Hunt at bhunt1@houstonisd.org to troubleshoot issues if needed.</p>

* Classroom interventions are not required in the event information from parent input, medical records, outside evaluations or school based screening indicates the student is grossly delayed in one or more of the developmental domains (i.e., cognitive, socio-emotional). IAT chairpersons should expedite the referral process in these situations.

